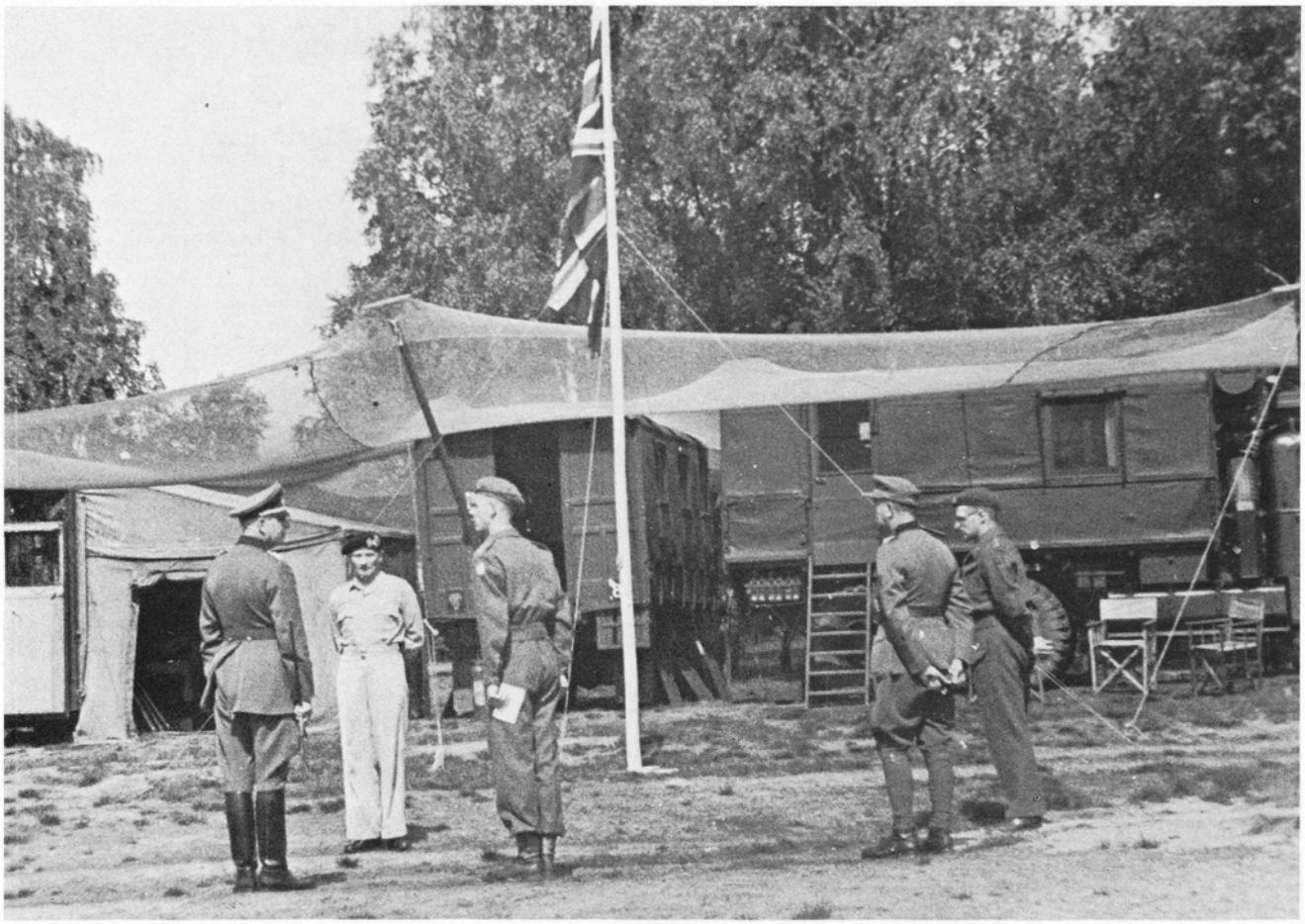
30th Anniversary of the German Surrender

AFTER THE BATTLE

SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE



SURRENDER AT LUNEBURG

At the beginning of May 1945, Field-Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery's Tactical Headquarters were situated on a hilltop on Luneburg Heath in Northern Germany—near the little German village of Wendisch Evern.

On Wednesday, May 2, Field-Marshal Montgomery received word that the German General der Infanterie, Gunther Blumentritt, proposed to offer the surrender of the German troops under his command, consisting of all the land forces between the River Weser and the Baltic. Although General Blumentritt had said he would arrive the next morning, he failed to do so, sending a message that negotiations were to be conducted at a higher level.

The next day, Thursday May 3, a delegation arrived at the Wendisch Evern headquarters to see Field-Marshal Montgomery. The party, which arrived at 11.30 a.m., consisted of General-Admiral Hans von Friedeburg (Commander-in-Chief of the German Navy) and General der Infanterie Kinzel (Chief-of-Staff to Feldmarschall Ernst Busch, Commander of the German forces opposing Montgomery's troops). They had with them their staff officers, Konteradmiral Wagner for Admiral von Friedeburg and Major Friedel for General Kinzel.

Directed to the Field-Marshal's caravan site, they were made to stand under the Union Jack flying nearby. After keeping them waiting for a short time, Field-Marshal Montgomery appeared and walked towards them. They saluted, and through his interpreter the Field-Marshal asked: 'Who are these men?' and then on receiving an answer: 'What do they want?'

Top: Peace overtures at Field-Marshal Montgomery's Tactical Headquarters at Wendisch Evern on Luneburg Heath—a still from a cine film (IWM). Above: Thirty years later our Land-Rover parked where Monty's caravan stood.

In his own inimitable style, Field-Marshal Montgomery describes what happened next:

They said, 'We've come here from Feldmarschall Busch to ask you to accept the surrender of the three German armies that are now withdrawing in front of the Russians in Mecklenburg between Rostock and Berlin. They are the 3rd Panzer, the 12th and 21st Armies.' They said, 'We want you to accept the surrender of these armies. We are very anxious about the condition of the civilians who are driven along as these armies flee from the advancing Russians and we want you to accept their surrender.'

I said, 'No, certainly not. These armies are fighting the Russians and therefore if they surrender to anybody it must be to the Russians—it has nothing to do with me and I am not going to have any dealings with

Above: The men who escorted the German peace delegation from the front line north of Hamburg, pictured at Second Army HQ. L-R: Lance Corporal W. Peaple, Lance Corporal H. Brennan, Lieutenant R. J. Frearson, Major K. H. Freeman (RA Provost Marshal, 7th Armoured Division), Lieutenant M. E. Johnston, Trooper R. Dawdry and Lance Corporal C. Flower (IWM).

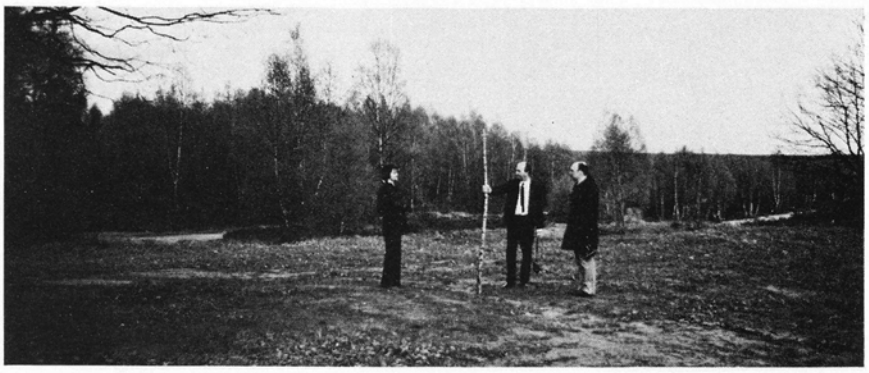
Top: The German officers arrive at General Dempsey's Second Army HQ on May 3, 1945, and are led into the Headquarters building (IWM). Above: The headquarters was situated in the home of Herr Mullering at Hacklingen, about five miles from Montgomery's TAC HQ. In 1967 the buildings were opened as the Psychiatrische Klinik.

Left: The four German officers to go to see Field-Marshal Montgomery leave the house and are escorted to their car (IWM). Above: Our ETO expert, Roger Bell, follows in the Germans' footsteps during our return visit.

anything on my eastern flank from Wismar to Domitz on the Elbe, on which flank we are now in closest contact with the Russians. This is the Russians' business. A Russian peace, therefore you surrender to the Russians. Now this subject is closed.' I then said to them, 'Are you prepared to surrender to me the German forces on my western and northern flanks—that is to say, all the German forces between Lubeck and Holland, and all those forces that they have in support of them? These forces including the German army in Denmark—will you surrender those?'

They said 'No'. So far it had been a very good discussion. Then they said, 'We are most anxious about the condition of civilians in the areas of Lubeck and on the northern flank—we are very anxious about them and we would like to come to some agreement with you by which these civilians can be saved slaughter in battle. We

Above: Beneath the Union Jack, the German officers are introduced to the Field-Marshal. They are from L-R: General-Admiral Hans von Friedeburg and General der Infanterie Kinzel with their staff officers Konteradmiral Wagner and on the extreme right Major Friedel. Below: Our team, after difficulty, mark the position of the flagpole.



Von Friedeburg reads the letter from Feldmarschall Keitel offering to surrender the German armies opposing the Russians.

After a break for lunch, Field-Marshal Montgomery states his three points necessary for the German surrender (IWM).

thought perhaps you would make some plan with us whereby you would advance slowly and we would withdraw slowly and all the civilians would be all right.' So far we had not got very far.

I said, 'No. There is nothing doing. I am not going to discuss any conditions at all as to what I am going to do. I wonder whether you officers know what is the battle situation on the Western Front? In case you don't I will show it to you.' I produced a map which showed the battle situation. That situation was a great shock to them. They were quite amazed and very upset. I was perfectly frank and held back no secrets. They were in a condition—and in a very good, ripe condition—to receive a further blow.'

At this stage, however, the Field-Marshal considered a break for lunch would give the German officers time to reflect on what he had said. In a tent by themselves, they had their lunch in the presence of one British officer. Afterwards, the Field-Marshal sent for them.

I said to them, 'You must clearly understand three points.

'One. You must surrender to me unconditionally all the German forces in Holland, in Friesland, including the Frisian Islands, Heligoland, and all other islands, in Schleswig-Holstein and in Denmark.

'Two. Once you have done that I am then prepared to discuss with you the implications of the surrender—that is to say I am prepared to say to you how we will dispose of the German forces, how we will occupy the area concerned, how we will deal with the civilians and so on. Once you have done Point Number One I will discuss Point Number Two.' (You see, they wanted me to do Point Number Two first.)

'Three. If you don't agree to Point Number One I shall go on with the war and will be delighted to do so and am ready. All your soldiers will be killed. These are the three points—there is no alternative—one, two, three, finished!'

Then they said to me, 'We came here entirely for the purpose of asking you to accept surrender of these German armies on your eastern flank and we have been given powers to agree to that subject only. We have no power to agree to what you now want. That is a new one on us. But two of us will now go back again to where we came from, get agreement and come back again. Two will stay here with you.'

The Field-Marshal then drafted a minute on what had been discussed and proposed, this being signed by himself and General-Admiral von Friedeburg. The document was to be taken to Grand-Admiral Doenitz, the new German Fuhrer at Flensburg, near the Danish border.

Admiral von Friedeburg and Major Friedel made the journey to Flensburg by car, escorted through Hamburg and into the German lines by the Field-Marshal's A.D.C., Lieutenant-Colonel Trumbull Warren. They had instructions to return by 6.00 p.m. the next day. The other two German officers remained at the Field-Marshal's headquarters.

Early the following morning, Friday, May 4, 'D' Squadron of the 11th Hussars, stationed at Quickborn, ten miles north of Hamburg, were warned to expect the German delegation.

The German cars arrived in the afternoon and were halted by No. 4 Troop. Captain Horsford went forward to investigate and shortly afterwards, 21st Army Group staff officers arrived to escort the German officers, led by General-Admiral von Friedeburg, to Wendisch Evern.

Meanwhile, at his Headquarters, Field-Marshal Montgomery was certain the Germans would return with full powers to sign the surrender. At 5.00 p.m. he called a press

Above: General-Admiral von Friedeburg and Major Friedel, returning after discussing the surrender terms with Grand-Admiral Doenitz at Flensburg, are halted by 'D' Squadron of the 11th Hussars outside the Bilsener Wohld pub north of Quickborn (IWM).

Above: Captain Malindine photographs the car leaving as the German officers proceed south on Kielerstrasse towards Hamburg, twenty-eight kilometres away (IWM). Below: Quickborn is on Route 4 running north to Denmark. The junction was widened in 1970.

Captain Malindine was present at the signing of the surrender to picture Field-Marshal Montgomery, using the army pen which disappeared after the ceremony, signing on behalf of General Eisenhower (IWM).

conference at which he outlined fully what had taken place the previous day and what he hoped would happen at 6.00 p.m.

General-Admiral von Friedeburg arrived back at the Luneburg Heath camp while the press conference was in progress, this information being passed to the Field-Marshal by his staff officer, Colonel Ewart. The Field-Marshal, however, carried on with his briefing, ending with the words: 'The next scene will be up top in the tent'.

The German officers, plus a new arrival, Colonel Pollek, were again paraded under the flag for the photographers. The Field-Marshal took von Friedeburg into his caravan, which was parked under the trees overlooking the camp site. Asked if he would sign the surrender, von Friedeburg said he would do so. The General-Admiral came out of the caravan at 6.20 p.m. followed by Field-Marshal Montgomery.

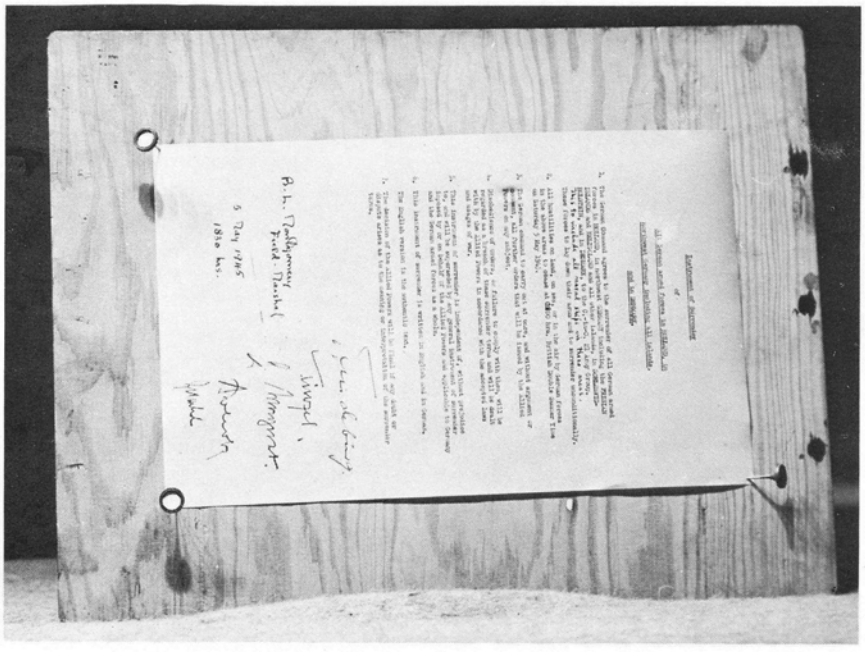
I gave orders for the ceremony to take place at once in a tent pitched for the purpose, which had been wired for the recording instruments. The German delegation went across to the tent, watched by groups of soldiers, war correspondents, photographers, and others—all very excited. They knew it was the end of the war.

I had the surrender document all ready. The arrangements in the tent were very simple—a trestle table covered with an army blanket, an inkpot, an ordinary army pen that you could buy in a shop for twopence. There were two B.B.C. microphones on the table. The Germans stood up as I entered; then we all sat down round the table. The Germans were clearly nervous and one of them took out a cigarette; he wanted to smoke to calm his nerves. I looked at him, and he put the cigarette away.

In that tent on Luneburg Heath, publicly in the presence of the Press and other spectators, I read out in English the Instrument of Surrender. I said that unless the German delegation signed this document immediately, and without argument on what would follow their capitulation, I would order the fighting to continue. I then called on each member of the German delegation by name to sign the document, which they did without any discussion. I then signed on behalf of General Eisenhower.

The document was in English, and the delegation could not understand it; but I gave them copies in German. When adding the date I wrote 5 May, then tried to change the 5 to a 4, then crossed it out and initialled it, and wrote 4 alongside. The original is typed on an ordinary sheet of army foolscap. I do not know what happened to the pen we all used; I suppose someone pinched it.

The second copy of the surrender document (on which the date has not been corrected), photographed pinned on a board on the table in the tent. This copy is still believed to be in the Field-Marshal's possession.



The next day, to commemorate the signing on what Field-Marshal Montgomery had now named Victory Hill, an oak plaque was erected. Three days later it was stolen and replaced. On September 24 it was daubed with paint and later found 400 yards away.

In November 1945, the wooden monument was replaced by a more permanent stone structure, weighing nine tons, quarried, fashioned and erected by Royal Engineers of 21 Army Group. Later a guard room was erected nearby and five Germans were employed, at 89 pfennigs per hour, to guard the stone day and night.

By April 1955 the cost of security for the stone had reached DM100,000, and for economic reasons the guard was withdrawn. The following month, the tenth anniversary of the signing, the bronze plaque was stolen and unknown Germans wrote on the stone 'Due to this victory Communism could spread in the heart of Europe. After ten years it is time to recognise the common danger. Let us forget the past.'

A new bronze plaque was made and on September 9, 1955, Major Harper, the local British Military Commandant, made the Burgermeister, Carl Basse, responsible for the safety of the monument.

For the next three years the stone remained unguarded and untouched. Then in 1958, when the British Army was due to hand over military control of that area of Germany to the German Army, Victory Hill was to be designated as part of a German battle training area. Also it was felt the memorial's safety could not be guaranteed once the British military presence was withdrawn.

With Field-Marshal Montgomery's permission (he had visited Luneburg that year), plans were made to return the memorial to England.

After careful consideration it was decided to re-erect it at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst and No. 17 Field Squadron, Royal Engineers were detailed to carry out the operation. Two of the largest cranes in Westphalia arrived on Victory Hill and after transportation in four sections, the monument was reconstructed on New College Square opposite the Royal Military Academy Officers' Mess.

On November 29, 1958, Field-Marshal, The Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, K.G., G.C.B., D.S.O., presented the stone to Sandhurst and two additional bronze plaques were added to commemorate the removal and unveiling. Meanwhile, in Germany, the title Victory Hill was now considered not appropriate, and the hill on Luneburg Heath reverted to its original name of Timeloberg.

The original surrender document was retained by Field-Marshal Montgomery although ordered by General Eisenhower to surrender it, only photostat copies were sent to SHAEF. In the end it was Winston Churchill who defended the Field-Marshal's right to keep the document.

In 1968 the Field-Marshal's home was broken into and he decided that the document should be handed over to the safe-keeping of the Imperial War Museum, where it can be seen on display today.

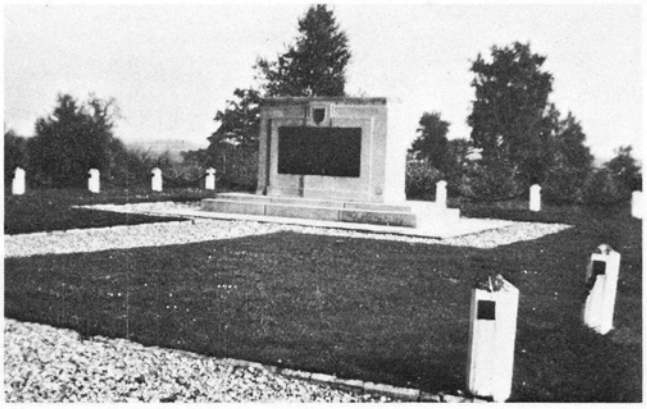
However, it is not perhaps generally known that there were and are two copies. We have reproduced a picture of the other copy; the one which was photographed by the Press (pinned on a board) after the signing. Although confirmation is not forthcoming, it is believed that it is still in the possession of Field-Marshal Montgomery.

By 1975, when the 'After the Battle' team returned to Luneburg on the 30th Anniversary of the signing of the surrender, considerable difficulty was found in tracing the spot where the memorial had stood. On May 4, 1975, with local help, after passing the usual 'Verboten' signs, we entered the tank training area.

There, on the rutted hillside, the concrete foundations of the stone could still be seen, and by careful comparison of the photographs we determined the 1945 position of the Field-Marshal's caravan and flagpole. There we waited, until the shadows lengthened and 6.30 p.m. approached. There were no other visitors; not a soul was to be seen. Alone, as we remembered the historic significance of this lonely hillside, we photographed the scene exactly thirty years later.

Above: The oak plaque which was erected about fifty yards from where the actual signing took place. Photograph taken by Sergeant Morris on June 3, 1945 (IWM).

The oak memorial tablet, erected after the signing, proved to be a vulnerable target for diehard fanatics! Here one of the German ex-Wehrmacht guards, Friedrich Dietje, cleans the plaque after it was daubed with paint on September 24, 1945. It was found 400 yards from its proper place (Central Press).



Above: Royal Engineers complete the erection of the stone monument on Victory Hill, which replaced the wooden plaque in November 1945 (Keystone). Inset left: The completed monument, photographed by the local policeman, Karl-Heinz Leder. Below: On the Timeloberg today, this is all that remains to mark the spot where the monument stood.

Above: The Field-Marshal, The Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, inspects the monument on November 29, 1958, after it was brought to England in four sections and re-erected on New College Square at Camberley (Keystone).

One of the After the Battle team inspects the plaque commemorating the moving of the stone in April 1975. The spacing of the words on the large bronze plaque is slightly different from the original one stolen in Germany.

CAPITULATION AT REIMS

The Allied Supreme Commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, had authorised Field-Marshal Montgomery to accept the military surrender of all forces in his allotted zone. This had already occurred in Italy, at Field-Marshal Alexander's headquarters on April 29 (indeed, Field-Marshal Montgomery had based the text of his document on the one signed in Italy), followed on May 5 by the German Army Group G in Northern Italy surrendering to General Devers and, to General Foulkes, Army Group H in Holland. Some German units holding out in surrounded towns and fortresses also made individual surrenders.

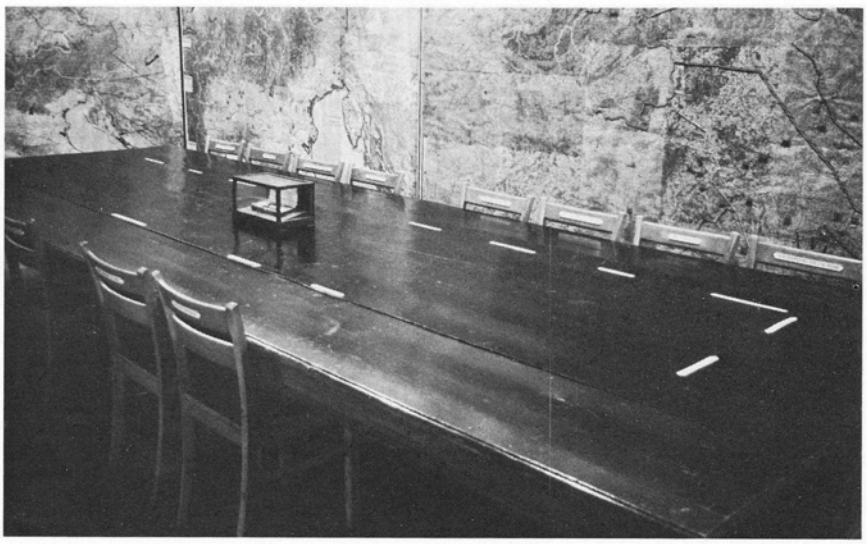
All these local surrenders were to be superseded by the signing of a single, complete, unconditional surrender document.

On Saturday, May 5, the day on which the Luneburg surrender became operative, General Eisenhower was at SHAEF Forward HQ, which was situated in a large school building in Reims, France. As notice of the German visit had reached Reims the day before, General Eisenhower had informed the Russian High Command who then designated Major-General Ivan Suslaparov to represent them.

Although Admiral von Friedeburg, accompanied by Colonel Pollek, were to be flown to Reims from Field-Marshal Montgomery's HQ, bad weather diverted their aircraft to Brussels, from whence they completed the journey to Reims by road. They finally arrived just after 5.00 p.m.

Meanwhile, the war room at SHAEF Forward HQ had been designated as the place for the signing. Camera crews, who had been allowed to set up their lights and equipment, moved the large table, normally in the centre of the room, to the far side to allow for more coverage from their lenses. Seventeen war reporters, representative of the world's press, had been authorised by the Public Relations Division in Paris to be present at the signing.

General Eisenhower, in 'Crusade for Europe', describes what happened next:



Top: As copies of the Reims Surrender document are passed to General Bedell Smith for signature, Captain Harry Butcher, General Eisenhower's Naval Aide, hovers in the background ready to secure the pens! The Allied representatives are L-R, General F. E. Morgan, Deputy Chief of Staff; Major-General F. Sevez, representing the French Chief of Staff; Admiral Sir H. M. Burrough, Allied Naval Commander; General W. B. Smith, SHAEF Chief of Staff; Lieutenant I. Chermiaev, Russian interpreter; Major-General I. Suslaparov, Russian High Command representative; General C. A. Spaatz, Commander of the USSTAF; Air Marshal Sir J. M. Robb, SHAEF Chief of Air Staff; Major-General H. R. Bull, Chief of Intelligence 12th US Army Group; Senior Lieutenant-Colonel I. Zenkovitch, Interpreter. The German officers on the nearside of the table are General-Admiral von Friedeburg, General Jodl and Major Oxenius (IWM). Above: The table, with the named chairs, in the War Room today. The box on the table holds the keys.

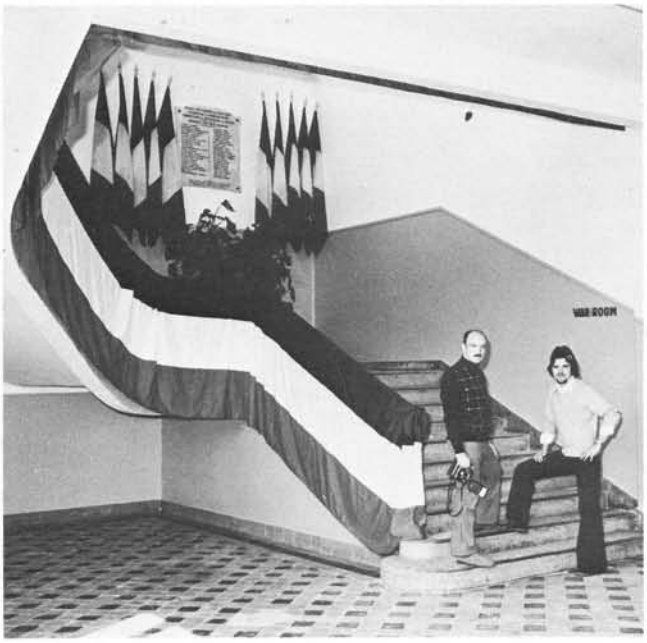
When Admiral Friedeburg arrived at Reims on May 5 he stated that he wished to clear up a number of points. On our side negotiations were conducted by my chief of staff, General Smith. The latter told Friedeburg there was no point in discussing anything, that our purpose was merely to accept an unconditional and total surrender. Friedeburg protested that he had no power to sign any such document. He was given permission to transmit a message to Doenitz.

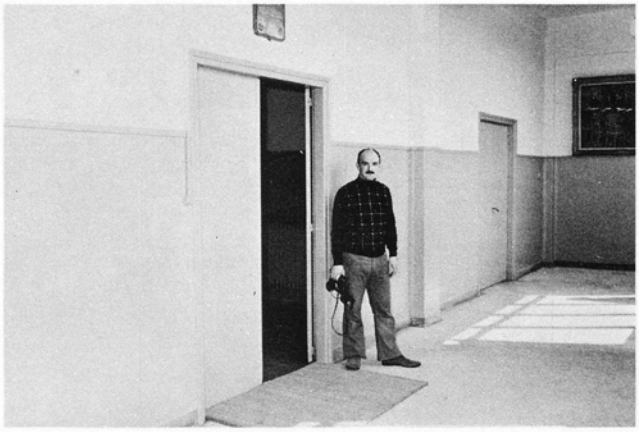
Admiral von Friedeburg had not brought a code with him or arranged radio frequencies to communicate with Grand-Admiral

Above: British and American military policemen guard the entrance to SHAEF Forward Headquarters at the Technical College in Reims (Keystone).

Above: Members of the After the Battle team outside the College entrance, May 8, 1975. Below: This is the door now used to gain entry to the preserved War Room.

Below left: The stairway to the War Room, situated on the first floor of the college. Below: Although wall-maps block the windows, the War Room overlooks the tree-lined college quadrangle.





The entrance door to the War Room, scene of the surrender in 1945 guarded, left, by a military policeman and, above, our ETO expert, Roger Bell.

Doenitz. The message had therefore to be relayed in SHAEF code to the British Second Army HQ, which was to decode the message and send it by messenger to Flensburg. As this would take some time, the two German officers spent the night at No. 3 Rue Godenot at Reims.

The reply, which was not received until after lunch the following day, Sunday, May 6, said that General Jodl was on his way to Reims with authority to sign the surrender. He arrived at SHAEF Forward later that afternoon. Even then the Germans asked for a delay of forty-eight hours. General Eisenhower:

> To us it seemed clear that the Germans were playing for time so that they could transfer behind our lines the largest possible number of German soldiers still in the field. I told General Smith to inform Jodl that unless they instantly ceased all pretence and delay I would close the entire Allied front and would, by force, prevent any more German refugees from entering our lines. I would brook no further delay in the matter.

Finally Jodl and Friedeburg drafted a cable to Doenitz requesting authority to make a complete surrender, to become effective forty-eight hours after signing. Had I agreed to this procedure the Germans could have found one excuse or another for postponing the signature and so securing additional delay. Through Smith, I informed them that the surrender would become effective forty-eight hours from midnight of that day; otherwise my threat to seal the western front would be carried out at once.

Doenitz at last saw the inevitability of compliance and the surrender instrument was signed by Jodl at 2.41 a.m., May 7. All hostilities were to cease at midnight May 8.

After the signing General Jodl was told by General Eisenhower that he would be held personally responsible for any violation of the surrender terms.

It was then discovered, to the Americans' embarrassment, that Brigadier-General Walter Bedell Smith had overlooked the draft for the capitulation document agreed by the European Advisory Commission (an Allied organisation established in 1943 which included the Russians). Instead he used a single short document of five paragraphs. The Russians protested and demanded that a new surrender document should be signed with the agreed EAC text.

Although the Americans agreed to a second signing of the 'official capitulation', in Berlin, General Eisenhower felt that the Reims document had accomplished the surrender and looked on the Berlin signing as 'ratification'. To this end he sent his deputy, Air Chief Marshal Tedder to represent him. Additional Allied respresentatives were Lieutenant-General Carl Spaatz, Commander

Below: General Eisenhower displays the two gold pens for the press. Captain Butcher looks on from behind. Other officers are L-R, Major-General Suslaparov, General Morgan, General Smith (Kay Summersby, Eisenhower's secretary, hides behind him), Air Chief Marshal Tedder and Admiral Burrough (US Signal Corps).

of the US Strategic Air Force in Europe, and Commander of the French First Army, General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny. The ceremony was arranged for May 8 at 2.00 p.m.

However, continual delays followed for the next ten hours. First over the French Flag, which was missing from the display in the room to be used for the proceedings at the Karlshorst Military College. Then arguments over the right of the American Air Force General and French General to sign, as Air Chief Marshal Tedder represented the Allies as a whole. This controversy was resolved by their signatures appearing a little below those of Tedder and Marshal Zhukov! The eventual signing took place at 11.45 p.m.

Following our stay at Luneberg on May 4 and 5, the 'After the Battle' team motored to Reims to take our comparison photographs there on May 8, the day the Reims capitulation in 1945 became operative.

Eisenhower's headquarters has often been called the 'little red school-house'. Nothing could be further from the truth. It was situated in a large French College, the College Moderne et Technique, on the Rue President Franklin Roosevelt. After the war the College reverted to its former use, but the SHAEF War Room used for the signing in 1945 has been preserved. It was presented to the town of Reims on July 7, 1945 and the maps and charts, which had been removed, were replaced.

As May 8, 1975 was the 30th Anniversary of the end of World War II, the whole of France had a national holiday. Regretfully, as the War Room was not open at 2.41 a.m., we had to content ourselves with a visit later in the morning. The table used for the signing is protected by a heavy barrier, still in the position to which it was moved by the photographers in 1945. Each place has a name card.

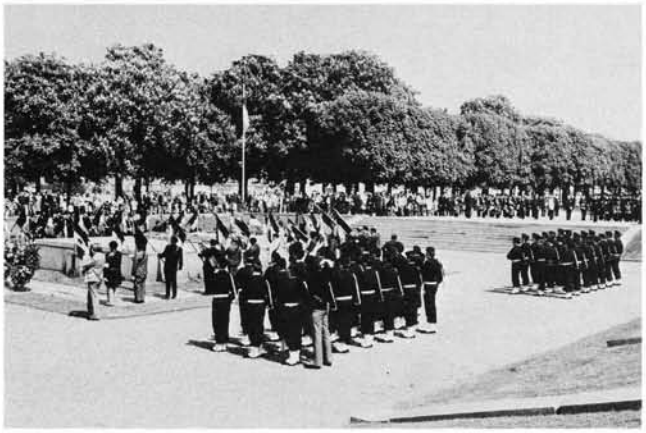
Unlike Luneburg, where the pen used soon went missing, General Eisenhower made special arrangements for the pens to be used at Reims. He gave his Naval Aide, Captain Harry Butcher, two pens, one gold, the other gold-plated, which he had been given by a close friend, Kenneth Parker, some months previously to be used when the time came for signing the German surrender. The solid gold one was to be given to the American President, the other returned to Parker. However, Captain Butcher anticipated trouble if the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, did not receive one. He therefore included his own pen, a Sheaffer, at the signing which could, if Ike wished, then be sent to Parker, leaving the gold-plated one for the Prime Minister!

Later that morning the official ceremony began, and a contingent of the French Army, together with members of the French Resistance, marched to the Reims War Memorial. There they were joined by Russian and American military representatives, the French Commander of the local Military region and Colonel D. Hargreaves, British Military Attache in Paris.

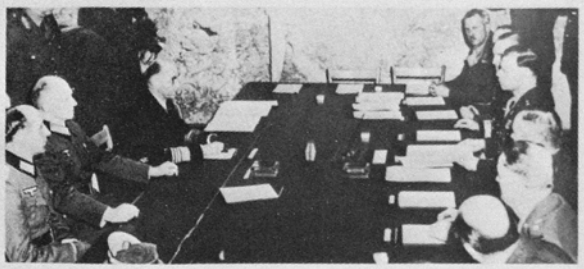
After a ceremony at the war memorial, the four representatives, symbolic of the joint signing thirty years previously, walked together through the town to the Hotel de Ville.

Above: General Eisenhower makes his victory speech for the film cameras. On his left the Deputy Supreme Commander Air Chief Marshal Tedder. One retake had to be made as Captain Butcher (on the left—pens safely in his pocket) corrected the General when he used the word 'armistice' (IWM). Below: The handing over of the SHAEF Forward War Room keys to the town of Reims on July 7, 1945.

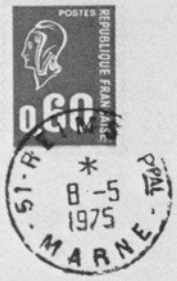
Below left: The ceremony at the Reims war memorial on the 30th Anniversary of the German Surrender, May 8, 1975. Below: Military representatives of the four 1945 Allies, American, British, French and Russian, walk from the memorial through Reims to a reception at the Hotel de Ville.



LUNEBURG, MAY 4 — EFFECTIVE MAY 5, 1945



REIMS, MAY 7 — EFFECTIVE MAY 8, 1945



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30th Anniversary of the German Surrender

AFTER THE BATTLE

AFTER THE BATTLE COMMEMORATIVE ENVELOPE

We felt the 30th Anniversary of the German surrender was an important milestone; something worth remembering, and early in April 1975 began to make plans for our visit. It was our idea to mark the occasion with something, so that our readers might feel associated with the event in whatever corner of the world they lived.

We decided to have a special envelope printed and stamped, and posted in Luneburg *and* Reims on the appropriate days of the 1945 capitulation, but thirty years later. We were quickly told that the French would not stamp the envelopes if already franked in Germany, but we decided that this was a trifle which we must surmount when the time came. We were also a little dubious of the German reaction to the printing on the envelope and even had visions of them being refused.

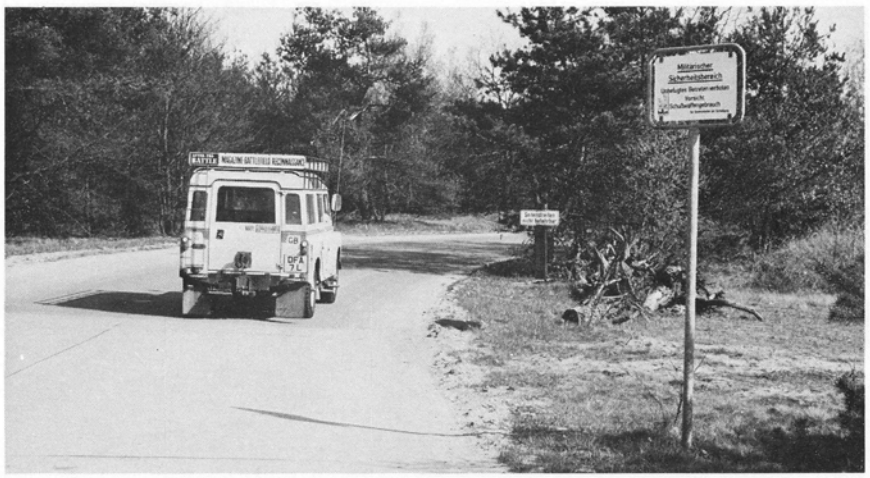
First task on our arrival in Luneburg was to purchase a quantity of the appropriate stamps and when we visited the post office it seemed to us that this 'commemorative cover' idea was unknown to the staff. We left two German postal clerks confirmed in their belief that we were crazy English, and finally left with 2,500 stamps!

We must add a word here that we were also researching on this trip the suicide of Heinrich Himmler, a story which we hope will soon be completed and will appear in *After the Battle*. We will not spoil this story by saying more now, other than the bonus: the German stamps were mounted on the envelopes directly on the spot where Himmler committed suicide!

The next day, Sunday, May 4, the envelopes were taken to the caravan site of Field-Marshal Montgomery's TAC HQ on Luneburg Heath and photographed, exactly thirty years later, on the spot where the surrender was signed.

On Monday, May 5, the day the surrender came into force, we arrived at the Luneberg post office where we had made arrangements for the franking of the envelopes to take place.

Then on to Reims on Wednesday May 7. Time was running short as we approached the French border at Sedan—it was imperative that the French postage stamps be bought that day to be stuck on the envelopes ready for franking the following day. For the first time in many trips, the French customs showed



Above: We enter the tank training area en-route for Victory Hill, May 4, 1975. Below: The Commemorative envelopes being photographed on the place where the surrender was signed.

Above: The German stamps are mounted over the exact spot where Heinrich Himmler committed suicide!

Top: Outside Luneburg railway station on our way to the post office May 5, 1975. Above: Adding the French stamps.

particular interest in our vehicle. With barely half an hour before closing time and Sedan still several miles away, several copies of *After the Battle* changed hands before we were able to continue on our way.

When we arrived at the post office, we learnt to our horror that the whole town, indeed the whole of France, would be closed the next day, as it was a national holiday for the very event for which we had arrived.

As we were being ushered towards the door, we knew there were only seconds before having it closed in our faces for the next 36 hours. Last-minute pleading revealed that one post office would be open and we hopefully kept our fingers crossed that night, whilst the French stamps were fixed alongside the franked German ones.

May 8 dawned bright and dry and we arrived at the address given. Sure enough the door of the post office was open, but the two emergency clerks fell off their stools when we marched in. More pleading produced extra hand stamps and within an hour or so—with our help—many hands had completed the job.

We then took the envelopes to the SHAEF War Room for another photograph to be taken.

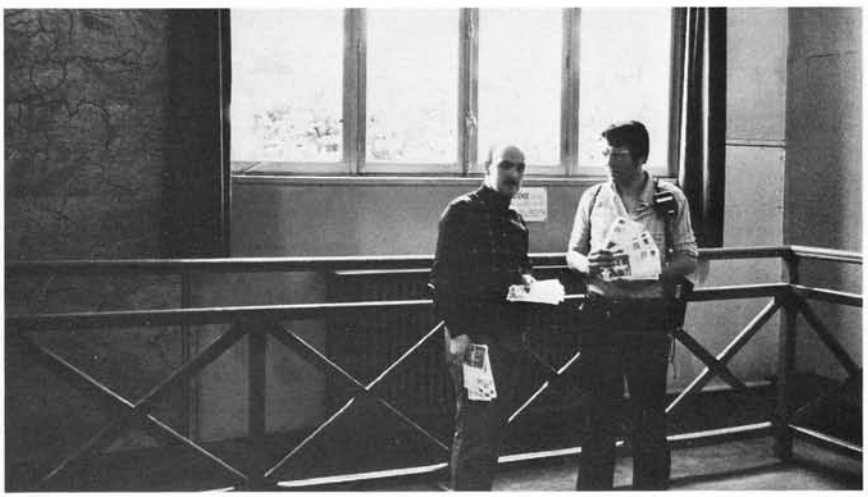
Finally, on our return to England, previously purchased stamps of the German Reich bearing Hitler's head (looted from a German post office by an American soldier in 1945) were added, together with an authentic cancellation stamp in red commemorating Hitler's birthday, on April 20, 1945.

Although this last franking was completed by our team, the editor feels it gives the link between 1945 and 1975, Hitler's last birthday occurring only days before the surrender was signed.

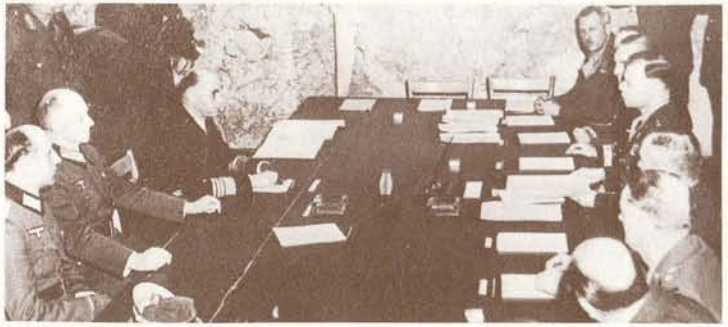
The limited quantity of individually-numbered, triple-stamped envelopes (as far as we know unique, in that two different countries' stamps appear on the one envelope) mean that there are only a sixth of the number required for all our readers. We feel that this adds to and preserves the originality and value of the operation.

The facsimile of the Luneburg Surrender document offered with the envelope is as near a copy of the original as possible. Size is exact; the paper was selected only after a long search to find a similar shade of cream wove and this, together with a match of the faded blue-black signatures, all contribute towards making a unique collector's item. An appropriately printed mounting sheet is provided to give the finishing touch for framing.

Above: About to enter the post office at Reims on May 8, 1975. Below: The editor and Roger Bell hold the double-franked envelopes in the SHAEF War Room.



LUNEBURG, MAY 4 — EFFECTIVE MAY 5, 1945



REIMS, MAY 7 — EFFECTIVE MAY 8, 1945

30th Anniversary of the German Surrender

AFTER THE BATTLE

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